CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method for classifying consumers in clusters, comprising:

generating a plurality of classification trees based on demographic data for a set of consumers and behavioral data for a set of consumers, each of said classification trees producing a consumer cluster set; and

searching said consumer cluster sets for an optimal consumer cluster set, said optimal consumer cluster set having a plurality of clusters of consumers,

wherein consumers in each cluster of said plurality of clusters have substantially similar behavioral and demographic characteristics to each other and different behavioral or demographic characteristics from consumers in all other clusters of said plurality of clusters.

2.   The method for classifying consumers according to Claim 1, wherein said generating comprises using Zhang's methodology.

3.   The method for classifying consumers according to Claim 1, wherein said searching comprises using Zhang's methodology.

4.   A segmentation system for classifying consumers in clusters, comprising:

means for generating a plurality of classification trees based on demographic data for a set of consumers and behavioral data for a set of consumers, each of said classification trees producing a consumer cluster set; and

means for searching said consumer cluster sets for an optimal consumer cluster set, said optimal consumer cluster set having a plurality of clusters of consumers,

wherein consumers in each cluster of said plurality of clusters have substantially similar behavioral and demographic characteristics to each other and different behavioral or demographic characteristics from consumers in all other clusters of said plurality of clusters.

16

5.   The segmentation system according to Claim 4, wherein said means for generating employs Zhang's methodology.

6.   The segmentation system according to Claim 4, wherein said means for searching employs Zhang's methodology.

7.   A segmentation system for classifying consumers in clusters, comprising:

    a partitioning module adapted to create classification trees to define consumer clusters;

    a profile definitions module for supplying profile definitions to said partitioning module for use in creating classification trees;

    a profile data module for supplying profile data to said partitioning module;

    a segment definitions module for supplying segment definitions data to said partitioning module; and

    a cluster assignments module for storing consumer clusters generated by said partitioning module,

    wherein said partitioning module generates an optimal classification tree resulting in a plurality of consumer clusters with consumers in each cluster of said plurality of clusters having substantially similar behavioral and demographic characteristics to each other and different behavioral or demographic characteristics from consumers in all other clusters of said plurality of clusters.

8.   The segmentation system according to Claim 7, further comprising:

    a summarization module adapted to generate summary data, said summary data being a summarization of data contained in said cluster assignments module; and

    a summary data module adapted to store said summary data.

9.   The segmentation system according to Claim 7, wherein said profile definitions module comprises a database.

10.   The segmentation system according to Claim 7, wherein said profile data module comprises an electronic file.

11.   The segmentation system according to Claim 7, wherein said segment definitions module comprises a dbase file.

12.   The segmentation system according to Claim 7, wherein said cluster assignments module comprises a dbase table.

13.   The segmentation system according to Claim 7, wherein said partitioning module uses Zhang's methodology to create classification trees.

18